

***H.B. NO 5037: AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM  
ENDING JUNE 30, 2023***

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France, and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Dawn DeMatteo. I am a member of CT DDS Families First, families advocating for the IDD population, a single mother of a 29 year old, severely disabled, Son (Anthony DelMoro) who is a client of DDS, and a Senior Account Executive at Schuster Group/NFP providing employee benefits to a majority of the non-profits serving this population. Basically, every aspect of my being is centered on this population and their needs.

First and foremost, I am extremely grateful for the DDS funding/supports Anthony receives. Thank you to Commissioner Scheff and his staff. Anthony was one of thousands on the DDS waiting list for over 15 years. Five years ago, his funding was approved and he now lives happily in a group home located in Wallingford. It is imperative that the Governor's budget continue to provide the necessary funding allocated to the waiting list for residential placement and other services combined with necessary state funding for the non-profits that serve these individuals.

I, like many, have been advocating for a decade or more and continue to see the same concerns with those waiting for services and the pain of the non-profits serving this population.

Prior to the impact of COVID 19, non-profits were struggling with the lack of funding resulting in low wages to those employees on the front line and insufficient funds for their day to day administration. Fast forward with the initial onset of the COVID 19, day programs were closed, placing additional responsibility on the residential staffing for those in group settings and families of individuals receiving in-home supports. This ultimately created additional burden for the non-profit agencies serving the population and further impacts our loved ones.

Today, we are observing extreme understaffing, including nursing, within all the agencies. In speaking with families, there are times when loved ones do not have staff that are med-certified to administer daily prescriptions. With over 17,000 DDS clients to be served, agencies need to be able to provide the services. Without the proper funding, services cannot be provided – ultimately our loved ones and families will suffer.

Wearing various hats, I personally see, hear, and feel the impact of inadequate funding and the effect it has on all parties. We ask that the legislators continue the ongoing commitment to individuals with intellectual disabilities and that the Governor's budget continue to fund DDS and non-profit agencies in support of said individuals.

**Dawn DeMatteo  
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